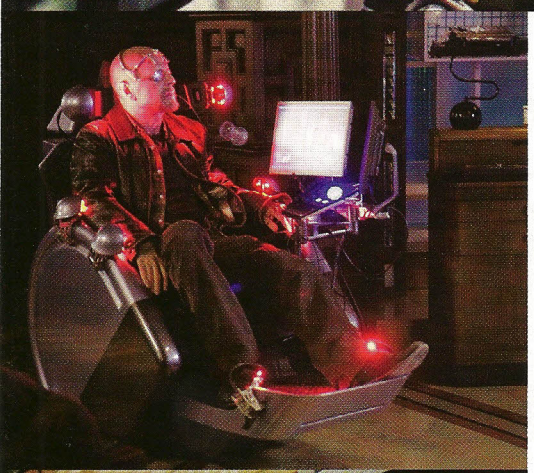
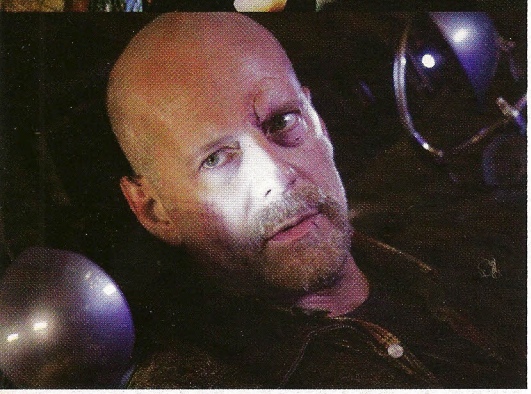


SKIN JOB







Terminator 3 **director JONATHAN MOSTOW helms the action thriller SURROGATES; a movie based on the successful comic book series by Robert Venditti. The story centers around a world where people live in near-total isolation, rarely leaving the safety and comfort of their homes, thanks to remotely-controlled robotic bodies that serve as 'surrogates'. These surrogates are designed as better-looking versions of their human operators. Because people are safe all the time – and any damage inflicted onto a surrogate is not felt by its owner – it is a peaceful world free from fear, pain and crime. Jonathan Mostow explains more...**

How would you describe your new movie, *Surrogates*?

The premise of the movie is that surrogacy has taken over the world, just like cell phones and computers. *Surrogates* are new devices that offer users the opportunity to experience life vicariously from the comfort and safety of their own homes. In our film, surrogates represent the ultimate freedom, from both physical harm and the mental toll of everyday life. Pleasure is achievable simply by plugging in. But for some, surrogacy feels like the abandonment of humanity itself. In a world where actual physical contact is increasingly rare, does the very notion of love threaten to lose its meaning? Those are some of the ideas we explore in our story.

What attracted you to the movie?

I was attracted to the story because I love the notion that we can live life vicariously through these surrogate robots. It is a metaphor for living in this digital age. Any time you sit down at a computer and communicate with somebody via email or a chat room or read their blog or whatever, you're not really experiencing them. There's some layer of technology that's inserted between you and another person – and this movie speaks directly to that.

What is at the core of the movie?

The core idea of *Surrogates* is how we retain our humanity in this increasingly, relentlessly technological world that we live in. Technology is great. The fantasy of technology is that it frees us to be creative, productive and to do all these wonderful things. The flip side to that is that we wind up being servants to it in a certain way. We're tethered to our cell phones. It's great to have email, but when you spend hours a day returning emails, it becomes an obligation. So these new opportunities and possibilities in life also restrain us in certain ways.

What's the story about?

This movie is a mystery and a detective story. Bruce Willis stars as an FBI agent whose investigation into the mysterious murder of a surrogate finds the hero confronting a conspiracy that calls into question the very definition of humanity. Bruce Willis's character is caught in this existential dilemma. He walks through life as everybody else does in this world, doing their job day to day – except he



does his through his surrogate, so he's really just staying at home. In the course of the movie, he begins to realise that he's not happy. He can't even articulate why he's not happy, but he knows he's not happy. And the circumstances of the story cause him to lose his surrogate halfway through the movie and he has to now go out in this surrogate world as a real person. It would sort of be the same as if you said, "You know what, I'm not going to use a telephone or email or faxing or any kind of electronics. I'm just going to exist as people existed 100 years ago. How would I feel and how would that change my life?" And, in so doing, he comes to realise that all this technology that's supposedly made life better, more perfect, safer and more enhanced isn't actually making anybody happier.

What's it like to work with Bruce Willis?

A great movie actor is the actor that can make you believe you know what they're thinking without a single word of dialogue. It's about how they move. It's about really specific nuanced things in their behaviour. And I believe Bruce is at the absolute top of his profession in that regard. I think he's one of the truly great cinematic actors of all time.

Is the movie set in the present day or the future?

Rather than try to do the future – as a lot of filmmakers do – I decided to set it in the present day. I feel that there is something non-authentic about Hollywood visions of the future always, so I decided to consider the era like cell phone technology. Cell phone technology started twenty years ago and it just took off. Now, everybody's got one. How would our lives be if everything was exactly the same as it is now except this new surrogate technology existed. It's a really interesting, different spin on doing a science fiction movie that has a futuristic premise. In our movie, everything is from the present day, including regular telephones and present day cars. The only difference that we have in our movie is that everybody's sitting at home in their "stim" chair operating a robot.

